

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

APRIL 2006

## S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL by TOM NELSON

During January 2006 the average, weekday, system ridership on Metrolink trains was 40,343, a 9 percent increase compared to Dec. This indicates most of the holiday drop in ridership recovered, although many passengers did not return to work schedules until after the first several days of Jan. The highest percentage increases in one month occurred on the Ventura and Inland Empire/Orange County Lines, 20 and 17 percent, respectively.

System schedule adherence in Jan. dropped to 92 percent. Lowest on-time performance, at 76 percent, occurred on the Riverside Line. This was due to the start of Union Pacific's track rehabilitation project which began in Jan. to lay new rail and concrete cross-ties. The remaining work was scheduled to take place during Mar., with the line to remain open between Pedley and L.A. Union Station. Speed restrictions on the Riverside Line were expected to be lifted by April. Best performance during the month was 97½ percent on the San Bernardino Line.

## ROLLING STOCK

On a six to five vote, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Board on Feb. 24, 2006, approved the staff recommendation to award Contract No. EP142-06 for commuter railcars to the Rotem Co. The award is not to exceed Rotem's total bid amount of \$305,974,486. At this time a Notice to Proceed will be issued only on the base quantity of 87 cars (54 trailers and 33 cab cars) at a cost not-to-exceed \$176,334,755. Option 1 is for up to 10 cab cars at a cost not-to-exceed \$17,788,200. Option 2 is for up to 10 cab cars at a cost not-to-exceed \$17,859,400. Any award protest was required to be received by 5:00 p.m. on Mar. 3, 2006.

If a Notice to Proceed on the base order was issued in Mar., the schedule for delivery of the 54 trailers is to begin in Dec. 2008 and for the 33 cab cars, beginning Feb. 2009. Funding for the base order of cars is included in SCRRA's approved multi-year New Capital Budget; partial funding will be received from federal sources. Notices to Proceed on the up-to-10 cab cars on each of Options 1 and 2 will be issued when funding becomes available.

Two other options in the contract would provide cars for SCRRA. Option 3 would make available up to six trailer cars and up to four cab cars, while Option 4 allows for purchase of another 20 trailers. An additional three options were included at the request of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority. Their Options 5 to 7 call for 14 trailers and 10 cab cars, but if all or part of them are not needed by South Florida, SCRRA may exercise these options to obtain the remaining cars.

SCRRA used the Competitive Low Bid procurement process. Expanded experience requirements of bidders included international passenger railcar design, manufacturing, testing, and

delivery for at least three separate projects in the last ten years. These had to involve at least 300 passenger railcars or car shells accepted and placed into service within those 10 years. The bidder must have shipped at least three passenger railcars per month from the same production line during at least four consecutive months over the last five years. Crash Energy Management (CEM) requirements were placed in the technical specification to include energy absorbing couplers, deformable anti-climbers, and an energy absorbing front-end structure.

Meeting the foregoing requirements and others, three companies submitted bids. In addition to the low bidder, Rotem, bid amounts were \$388,759,334 by Bombardier Transit Corp. and \$556,530,762 by Kawasaki Rail Car, Inc. Prior to the receipt of bids, the engineer's estimate was \$403,804,197.

Rotem Company, owned by Hyundai, began operations in July 1999. Since then more than 4,000 railcars for transit entities have been produced and delivered to 31 countries. The manufacturing plant in South Korea is highly automated and can produce 700 units a year, about 14 a week. It has the capacity to operate five production lines simultaneously. Rotem's final assembly plant for the SCRRA contract is in Philadelphia, and 62 percent of the product will meet the Buy America Act requirements.

During discussion of the contract on Feb. 24, a motion was put forth to delay award approval for one month until completion of CEM tests. This would not have helped, because the test results will not be ready for eight months.

## CONSTRUCTION

On Feb. 24 a contract to build the second mainline track between Santa Ana and City of Orange along Lincoln Ave. finally came before the SCRRA Board and was authorized. The contract, No. C3074-06, was awarded to FCI Constructors, Inc., for a total amount not-to-exceed \$13,860,113.

The award is contingent upon approval of additional funding by the Orange County Transportation Authority. Due to acquisition of a small parcel of property required for the project, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) had to be prepared. Although the EIR was approved in Dec. 2002, there followed many construction details to be worked out with the City of Santa Ana. The cost of materials, labor, etc. increased markedly during 2003, 04, and 05. Next lowest bidder was Shimmick Construction Co., and high bidder was Herzog Contracting Corp.

The project scope is to adjust the existing single-track alignment, build 1.8 miles of new track, modify four public road crossings, and add decorative walls and landscaping along Lincoln Ave. FCI has performed similar work for Caltrans, North (San Diego) County Transit District, and the City of Tustin.

[continued at **COMMUTER** on Page 4]



**WHEEL CLICKS**

**APRIL 2006 VOLUME 70, NO. 1**

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Published monthly by Pacific Railroad society, Inc., P. O. Box 80726, San Marino, California 91118-8726. The Society is a California chartered, nonprofit organization of those who share an interest in railroad operations, travel and history. Telephone (562) 692-4858. INTERNET Home Page: <http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org> For excursion informaton, phone (626) 570-8651.

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**Membership Dues: \$25.00 per year**

**PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM** is operated by Pacific Railroad Society at 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773. Telephone (909) 394-0616. Museum e-mail: [PRSTrainman@aol.com](mailto:PRSTrainman@aol.com) Open Saturdays. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays 1-5 p.m.

**MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR** ..... LINDSAY SMITH

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**PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

- Apr. 1, 8, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Apr. 15, 22, 29 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting on April 22.
- Apr. 1, 8, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 1, 15.
- Apr. 15, 22, 29 Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 1, 15.
- Sats. Extra work day: 8, 22, 29. Committee meeting: 15.
- Apr. 7 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Valencia Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Apr. 14 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Alhambra Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Apr. 22-23 PRS cars *Descanso* is open and *Shasta Springs* is running at OERM Train & Trolley Festival, Perris, Calif.
- Sat.-Sun. Perris, Calif.
- May 5 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Valencia Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- May 6 & 7 Fullerton Railroad Days, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Fullerton Station, 124 E. Santa Fe Ave. Visit PRS' Table.
- Sat.& Sun. Station, 124 E. Santa Fe Ave. Visit PRS' Table.
- May 6, 13, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- 20, 27 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting on May 27.
- May 6, 13, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 6, 20.
- 20, 27 Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 6, 20.
- Sats. Extra work day: 13, 27.

- May 12 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Alhambra Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- May 13 Exc. #523 *National Forum* on the *Surfliner* from Los Angeles to San Diego and return. Leave L.A. 7:20 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. Leave San Diego 10:35 a.m. or 6:20 p.m.
- Sat. Los Angeles to San Diego and return. Leave L.A. 7:20 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. Leave San Diego 10:35 a.m. or 6:20 p.m.

**MEETING PROGRAMS**

by **RUSS DAVIES**

- April 14: **It's hard to believe that the Los Angeles to Long Beach Blue Line opened 16 years ago!** Tonight we'll see **Bill Volkmer's slide presentation of the planning and construction phases.** We'll also see some "today" scenes of this, **the most heavily patronized light rail line in the USA!** Bill is a graduate engineer, working for Kaiser Engineers, who now lives in South Florida, and is an executive with the commuter rail authority in the Miami area. He recently donated his Blue Line construction slides to our Pacific Railroad Museum. **Be there, and bring slide briefs!**
- May 12: **Revisit the Golden Spike Centennial of May 1969!** **John Petros was there,** and will share his slides of that epoch event with us. We'll see the **joint PRS/OETM Southern California "Centennial Train"** on its way to Utah with **23 cars,** and behind **SIX freshly painted SP E-units** (for you youngsters, OERM was formerly the **Orange Empire Trolley Museum**). Briefly, the itinerary for the May 8 to May 11 excursion was Los Angeles to Ogden via **SP's Valley Line** (including "**The Loop**," of course), and over **Donner** to Utah. The **Golden Spike reenactment** was at Promontory on May 10th, and the return trip was via **UP.** **You'll see it all! Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

**MEMBERSHIP**

by **BILL FARMER**

At the Board Meeting on March 3, 2006, Edward E. Hailwood and Brian Bennett were voted into PRS with Seniority Numbers 578 and 579, respectively. Luzius Amrein, #311, renewed for 2006 with a Life Membership.

**BOARD MINUTES SYNOPSIS—FEBRUARY 3, 2006**

[Complete Minutes can be obtained from Secretary Bill Smith.]  
 Call to Order—The PRS Board was called to order at 7:51 p.m.  
 Roll Call—Present were: President Will Walters, Vice-President Rob Markowitz, Secretary Bill Smith, Treasurer Marti Ann Draper, Directors Dave Abbott, Owen Danaher, Dick Finley, and Lindsay Smith. Absent: Stan Ames (excused). Also present: Vic Carlucci, Cecelia Ditlefsen, Barbara Sibert, Charles Stone, and John Ulloth.  
 Secretary—Bill Smith reported that a replacement gavel with inscription was available from Artistic Awards in Pasadena for \$40.00. The Board voted to buy a replacement for our broken gavel.  
 Treasurer—Marti Ann Draper presented the financial report for Feb. 3, 2006, and mentioned the need for PRS to "look at what we're spending in operations."  
 Insurance—Cecelia Ditlefsen reported that railroad coverage is up for renewal on Apr. 1. A Long Beach insurance firm, Hammon, Miller, Beauchamp and Deeble, responded to her inquiry.  
 Excursions—Barbara Sibert reported there are 24 bookings for

“Breakfast in the Diner” and 30 bookings for the 70th Anniversary celebration in Ventura. The Board ratified the cross-country trip in June on board *National Forum*. The Board approved a San Diego turnaround with *National Forum* on May 13, 2006. The Board approved a trip with *National Forum* to San Luis Obispo on June 3, with another trip on June 4 if demand warrants.

Museum—Owen Danaher reported 35 visitors signed the guest book at PRM. The roof job has been put off until April.

Rolling Stock—Progress is being made on the locomotive and cupola caboose. *Starlight Cafe and National Forum* are being prepped for “Breakfast in the Diner.” *Chippewa Creek* is still at Saunders Yard. The baggage cars are still at Golden Gate Railway Museum aside from one at Redwood City.

Publicity—John Ulloth stated he would be glad to chair the Fullerton Railroad Days committee, and the Board voted an appropriation of not more than \$400.00 for the celebration on May 6 and 7, 2006.

Nominating Committee—Lindsay Smith stressed the importance of nominees providing a candidate statement of no more than 150 words, as per the Bylaws.

Adjournment—Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

### ELECTION RESULTS

The tally of ballots cast by PRS members was counted at the Annual Meeting on March 10, 2006.

President . . . . .	Vic Carlucci . . . . .	173
Vice-President . . . . .	Rob Markowitz . . . . .	171
Secretary . . . . .	Bill Smith . . . . .	174
Treasurer . . . . .	Marti Ann Draper . . . . .	175
Director . . . . .	Chris Parker . . . . .	172

There were six miscellaneous votes for several offices, so the candidates above were essentially unopposed as new officers. With 583 current members, voting was 30 percent, which is 5.5 percent less than last year. Thanks to the Election Committee Chair Charles Varnes, and Vic Carlucci, Dave Abbott, Barbara Sibert, and Marti Ann Draper.

### PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM by LINDSAY SMITH

The Museum is open on Wednesday and Saturdays! The gang goes for lunch at Roady’s, a coffee shop that seems almost historical in San Dimas. You are encouraged to visit to share the conversation and fun with history.

We recently hosted a Glendora Cub Scout Den on a Saturday visit.

We have just completed the acquisition process on the Robert Noon collection. His daughter, Nancy Noon Dingus, packed up the collection and sent it to Ralph Melching by UPS from Tucson. There were over 300 books and reports in this collection. We had to store the boxes because we were refurbishing the Freight Deck when it arrived. It has taken us a long time to mark, inventory and place the Noon collection on the shelves. Nancy called recently and announced she is sending over more, since she is moving from Tucson. Robert Noon worked for the Pacific Electric and Southern Pacific and there are many rare and wonderful items in his gift.

The Original Whistle Stop in Pasadena passed on a huge collection, that is currently being processed for display. We can

do about three boxes of books and documents in a good week. We have also received other gifts of books, tapes or images that are incorporated into the collection.

We have a large backlog of surplus items from the collection. Since our problem is “space management,” we have adopted a policy of retaining only two copies of each book. As a result we have available books for others to enjoy. In a librarian’s term, we have to deacquisition these items. Owen Danaher, the Company Store Manager, could be assisted by someone who might like to sell some books on the Internet or by announcing the availability of items in Wheel Clicks. We have been selling items at the General Meeting in Alhambra.

### DESCANSO

by LINDSAY SMITH

Help Wanted! The last remaining funeral car, *Descanso*, is still housed at the Orange Empire Railway Museum (OERM) in Perris CA. Lindsay Smith has been coordinating the maintenance and display of *Descanso*. He recommended, and the Board has made, *Descanso* a sub-committee to the Rolling Stock Committee. Lindsay was recently appointed Chairman of the Museum Committee and thus, he is the Curator of our collection and archives at the Pacific Railroad Museum in San Dimas. The *Descanso* Committee needs a leader who can do more than Lindsay. The position is not demanding or expensive. It takes a day to prepare and the days of the show at Perris and there are many who enjoy showing the car at the OERM events who do help. We have found that the car is not fully appreciated during the Thomas the Tank Events, so there are only a few events during the year when the car is brought out for display. The car is in very good condition; it is one of the best restorations at OERM. To keep it in good condition it will need a concerned custodian. If you are interested, please contact Will Walters or Vic Carlucci. Lindsay will be glad to help you get started.

### WALTER ABBENSETH

Walter Abbenseth passed away on February 12, 2006, at 79 years of age. In recollection, close to 50 years ago at Travel Town, Walter took possession of Pacific Electric car 1001, the last of the great Pacific Electric wooden interurbans. The rest of the 1000 class cars had gone to scrap years earlier, but the 1001 was converted to a rail grinder in Maintenance of Way service. With the sale of PE’s passenger service, the 1001 also was surplus and was set to go to the scrappers torch except for Walter’s intervention.

That day at Travel Town, Walter was single handedly working to remove the large water ballast tank in the car that was installed over the grinding truck for weight. This was the first PE car that Walter purchased. He went on to buy Car 314 and the last four of the PE 600 Class fleet when the Watts line was abandoned in 1959. He also bought half interest in PE 1299 Business Car and perhaps half interest in Car 498. At one time Walter owned more interurban cars than some operating trolley systems.

Walter spent most of his free time working on his cars. At OERM you could find him working on them on Saturdays, and after his retirement from PE (later Southern Pacific), he spent many days of the week at that museum working to keep his cars

painted, clean and looking good.

Walter had strong feelings on the appearance of how PE cars should look and that was the pre-war all red paint scheme without the orange and silver. However, he did paint two of his 600 cars in the red, orange and silver scheme since a lot of body work would have been required to bring the cars to their pre-modernization all red appearance. The cars can be seen today at OERM as some of the best looking ones there.

Walter never married. He did not drive. He lived with his mother until her passing in the 1950s in a house they bought in the 1940s in Pasadena. Walter walked and bicycled a great deal. Many times before its sale, he would bicycle to his house in Redondo Beach, a 40 plus mile ride before he sold the house to buy more interurbans.

Walter left a lot in his wake, especially the warmth and friendship with his friends, his honesty, the many PE interurbans that would have been lost, and all the movies and pictures that he took and saved. *Excerpts from an obituary by Alan Fishel*

#### [COMMUTER from Page 1]

Also on Feb. 24, Job Order Contract No. JO103-06, Track Rehabilitation Services during a period of up to one year, was authorized by SCRRA. Herzog Contracting Corp. was successful bidder in an amount not-to-exceed \$3,000,000. Repair, remodeling, or other repetitive work will be performed on an as-needed basis under individual job orders. Track rehabilitation will include tasks such as replacement of turnouts and failed wooden crossties, transposition and replacement of rail, and rehabilitation of concrete grade-crossing surfaces in all Metro-link subdivisions.

#### MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE

The U.S. National Park Service held a Grand Opening ceremony on March 25, 2006, at the ex-Union Pacific RR depot in Kelso after a lengthy refurbishing. Built by the UP in 1924, the huge depot served as a base for helper steam engine crews to move eastbound trains up the 22-mile 2.2% grade from Kelso to Cima. Following dieselization after WW II, the depot fell into disrepair, and the railroad gave the depot to the National Park Service, which has made it into a museum for the benefit of visitors to Mojave National Preserve.

Some of the rooms in the depot have been made into exhibits of historical items, while a few of the former rooms have been returned to bedrooms and reading rooms to give visitors a view of how the building's interior used to look.

The official dedication was to start at 2:00 p.m., while tours and field trips were to begin at 10:00 a.m. Light refreshments will be served, but visitors are advised to pack their own lunches, as there are no eating facilities closer than Cima. *Remember to always bring plenty of drinking water with you any time you visit the desert!*

The depot will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. To reach Kelso from Los Angeles, the shortest route is east on I-40 from Barstow to the Kelbaker Road east of Ludlow, then 22 miles north. The longer way is east on I-15 to Baker, then southeast on the Kelbaker Road 35 miles.

[Info. from Chard Walker]

#### CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

After months of construction, the new Hillsdale boarding platforms are finally complete. The new platforms are 300 feet north of the former ones, and include center fencing and pedestrian crossing gates, so that trains no longer have to "hold out" while another train is occupying the station. In addition to the new platforms, much needed track work was performed at Hillsdale, including replacing approximately 500 ties, followed by realigning the supporting ballast and tracks.

On February 27, Caltrain kicked off construction of a new Bike Depot at the Fourth and King Street Station in San Francisco. The event featured many speakers and free refreshments. Actual construction began in early March and should be completed by mid-summer. The 1600 square-foot facility will accommodate at least 100 bicycles and will be free of charge. The operator, Warm Planet Bikes, will offer bike-related services and repairs for a fee.

On February 10, Caltrain ran three special trains following a World Cup soccer game at AT&T (formerly SBC)(formerly PacBell) Park in San Francisco. The trains followed the same pattern as after Giants' games, with the first train departing 15 minutes after the game ended and running nonstop to San Carlos, then making all local stops to San Jose. The second and third trains left when full and ran as locals for the entire trip.

The city of Burlingame held a public hearing on February 22 to receive comments on a proposal by Caltrain to improve the Burlingame station. The proposal includes closing a street crossing and extending the boarding platforms south of their current location. It also includes tearing out the current center platform and building two "outside" platforms with fencing and pedestrian crossing gates. This will allow two trains to occupy the platform at the same time. Burlingame is one of the few remaining stations where only one train may occupy the platform at a time. Construction is expected to begin in Summer of 2007 and take about one year to complete.

Caltrain's Palo Alto station reopened last December after months of renovation to restore floors and repair bathrooms and lighting fixtures. The \$7.5 million project also included remodeled bus bays for Valley Transit and Samtrans passengers, which opened last Fall, and features a new canopied plaza with landscaping, new seating, and state-of-the-art lighting. The Palo Alto Bikestation, located in the former Southern Pacific baggage room, has also been remodeled and was reopened in March.

#### LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of January 2006, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 285,761. [Calculations by Tom Nelson].

#### BNSF TRIPLE TRACK

by CHARLES VARNES

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe placed a third main track in service on its Cajon Subdivision from Verdmont (MP 73.9) to Keenbrook (MP 69.6) on January 16, 2006. The addition of the new track extends the triple track already in service between San Bernardino (MP 81.4) and Keenbrook. Grading for a third main track from Keenbrook to Cajon Station at Milepost 62.9 is tentatively set for the last quarter of 2006.

At the west end of its Needles Subdivision construction of a third main track between Daggett (MP 737.3) and East Barstow (MP 743.6) will be completed and the track will enter service in the first quarter of 2006. Also in the first quarter, a third main track from West Needles (MP 580.2) to Goffs (MP 609) will enter service.

[Info. from Ed Von Nordeck]

### STATE PARK STEAM-POWERED PASSENGER TRAINS RESUME OPERATION by CHARLES VARNES

Steam locomotive powered excursion passenger trains will begin their 2006 operating season at the California State Railroad Museum and the Railtown 1897 State Historic Park on the April 1 and 2 weekend. The trains will operate every weekend through September.

At the California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento Southern Railroad excursion trains will depart on-the-hour 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. from the Central Pacific Railroad Freight Depot in Old Sacramento, located on Front Street (closest street to the riverfront) two blocks south of the museum. The excursion is a 40-minute, six-mile round trip route along the banks of the Sacramento River. Regular excursion train tickets are \$8 adults, \$3 youths ages 6-17, children ages 5 and under ride free.

At Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, located in Jamestown, California, excursion trains will depart on-the-hour from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for a six-mile, 40-minute round trip ride through California's scenic Gold Country. Train tickets are \$8 adults, \$3 youths ages 6-17, ages 5 and under ride free.

At Railtown guided tours of the Historic Jamestown Shops and Roundhouse are offered, also. The tours begin ten minutes past each hour, from 10:10 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday (Roundhouse Tours are available daily). Tours are \$2 adults, \$1 youths ages 6-17, ages 5 and under tour free.

The Railtown Depot Store, Interpretive Center, and grounds are open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day) from April through October. Shorter, winter operating hours are in effect November-March. Railtown 1897 State Historic Park is located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Reservoir Road in Jamestown.

### RAILROAD RADIO UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

Changes and additions to railroad radio use in California occurred around the beginning of 2006.

In early December 2005 the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway added two new dispatcher frequencies on its Stockton Subdivision. They are 161.385 (AAR Channel 85) from Milepost 1008.0 to 1064.0, and 160.650 MHZ (AAR Channel 36) from Milepost 1064.0 to 1139.2. The nearest stations to where the new frequencies are in use is Figarden (MP 1005.0) to Fluhr (MP 1062.9) and Fluhr to Bixler (MP 1139.2) respectively. The Stockton Subdivision extends from Calwa (MP 994.9), approximately four miles south of Fresno, to Richmond (MP 1189.0).

Also in December, the Union Pacific placed a new radio base station in service near CP Sepulveda (MP 15.5) at the south end of the Alameda Corridor Subdivision. The station gives the UP dispatcher the ability to communicate on the following frequencies, 160.320 MHZ (AAR Channel 14), 160.980 MHZ (AAR

Channel 58), and 161.400 MHZ (AAR Channel 86).

Near the end of December 2005, UP placed the following routes under Coastal Beach Dispatcher 50's control. They are its Santa Barbara Subdivision from Ellwood (MPs 335.8/336.3) to, but not including, Metrolink Ventura Subdivision CP Las Posas (UP MP 423.1); its UP Alhambra and Yuma Subdivisions from, but not including, Metrolink River Subdivision CP Yuma Junction (UP MP 482.8) to the Loma Linda crossovers (MP 541.3); and its Mojave Subdivision (Palmdale-Colton Cutoff) from Dike (MPs 480.2/481.1) to the end of this Subdivision at the Wye at Rancho UP MP 492.7. The frequency used on all of the routes is 160.740 (AAR Channel 42).

Two other dispatcher assignment changes on the UP occurred at about the same time. The Santa Barbara Subdivision from North San Luis Obispo (MP 248.5) to Ellwood was assigned to Omaha Dispatcher 58, and the Yuma Subdivision from Loma Linda to Araz (MP 725.8) was assigned to Dispatcher 48. Both lines utilize 161.550 MHZ (AAR Channel 96) for their dispatcher frequency.

### AUSTRALIA RAIL – II

Story and Photographs by Karl Strauss

[See Pages 6 and 9 for photographs.]

#### TENTERFIELD

Located on the once-active mainline between Sydney and Brisbane, the town of Tenterfield has restored its "garden-style" station into a fantastic museum. Built in 1886 and still featuring fine iron lacework, it has countless numbers of hanging flower pots. [Photo #10]

The faithfully restored museum features a few pieces of rolling stock, including an RDC-type car currently undergoing restoration by the museum volunteers. [Photo #11]

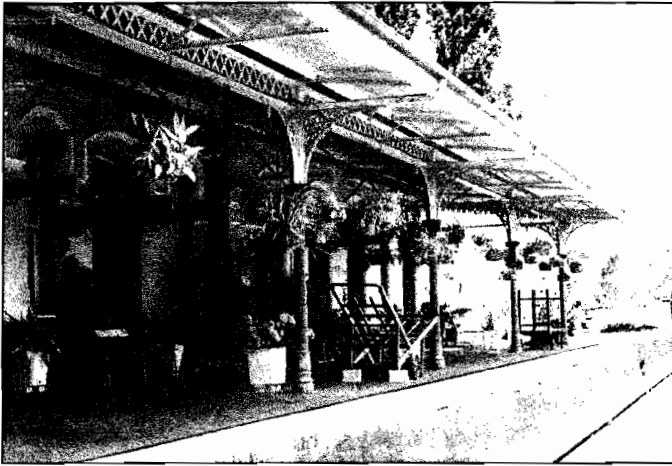
One is permitted to walk to the end of the local yard to see where hundreds of bales of wool were once loaded into boxcars. A 50-foot, Philadelphia-built turntable still functions. Now as before, muscle power is used to turn the engine. Following 9/11, the museum had to cancel their "speeder" car runs due to a sharp increase in insurance. The museum reports that they should be restoring that weekend adventure shortly as they have located insurance at reasonable rates.

The museum has recently entered negotiations with NSWRR to obtain trackage rights, so that they may run their restored rolling stock north to the town of Wallangarra, and south to the siding of Bolivia. [Photo #12]

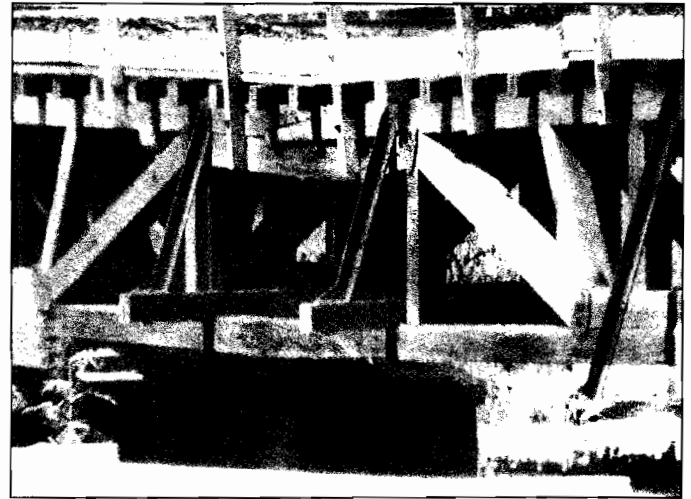
(One must question the viability of this venture given the condition of the bridge over Tenterfield Creek.) Nevertheless, the museum staff has a wonderful can-do "no worries" attitude and they may be able to pull this off. [Photo #13]

Though no longer used by the NSWRR, the mainline has not been abandoned. Last used for passenger service seven years ago, and freight six, the line is, surprisingly, in fairly usable condition. A walking inspection at random locations showed the "sleepers" (ties) in good shape. Switches and derails appeared dully functional.

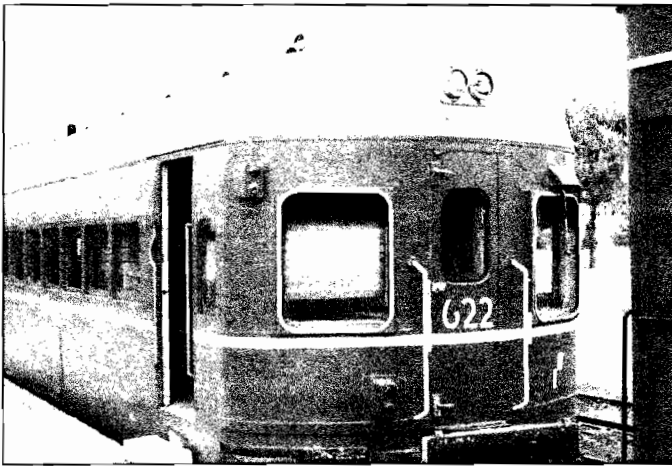
Tenterfield is the birthplace of Australian independence from British rule, where Sir Henry Parkes rallied the farmers and bushmen to fight for their independence from the steps of the local schoolhouse. However, Tenterfield's most famous export



#10 With one look, it is easy to see why Tenterfield was called a fine example of a "Garden-style" station.



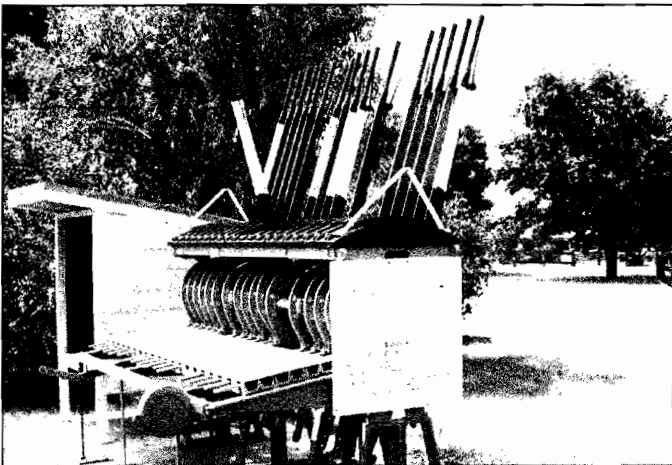
#13 The NSWRR bridge crosses Tenterfield Creek to the north of town. The Tenterfield Museum hopes to obtain trackage rights to permit them to cross this bridge on their way north.



#11 RDC-type car 622 was affectionately known as a "slug."



#14 This plaque notes the boundary between the Australian states of Queensland and New South Wales – smack-dab in the middle of the Wallangarra Station.



#12 The 20-lever interlocking plant from Bolivia siding was installed at the Tenterfield museum in 2002.



#15 Perhaps the most famous depot in all of Australia is the Wallangarra Station – the result of two states not getting along.

is the late great singer and songwriter Peter Allen. Peter's grandfather was one of five *Tenterfield Saddlers* operating a two-room shop that is still in use and operation today. For any tour to Australia, a Tenterfield and its many surrounding National Parks is not to be missed.

#### WALLANGARRA

Twenty miles north of Tenterfield is the border between the states of New South Wales and Queensland. Straddling the border – literally – is the Wallangarra Station. [Photo #14]

The station is a quirky, yet entirely pleasing mish-mash resulting from the mismatch of architectures because the two states could not agree on what it should look like. [Photo #15]

So there you have it, on one side is a narrow-gauge (3'-6") track that leads north (beyond) towards Brisbane. Note the utilitarian overhang (left). Compare that to the broader, sweeping overhang (right) that sheltered the travelers as they arrived from Sydney at the south on the standard gauge "Great Northern" line. Needless to say Wallangarra was a change of gauge location. [Photo #16].

Unlike similar occurrences in the United States where cars were lifted and fitted with new bogies (trucks), here stevedores transferred freight and baggage between trainsets. Baggage cars were brought into a bay at the south end of the station and an iron plate dropped between them. Then workers transferred goods from one car to the other [Photo #17]

A set of long side-by-side tracks – one standard gauge, the other narrow – reside to the south of the station itself. Similarly, goods were transferred from car to car by human backbone and sweat. Freight cars were weighed just prior to their being placed into a trainset being assembled. [Photo #18]

The Wallangarra Station has a fully operational restaurant (weekends only) featuring the same menu that passengers were treated to while they waited transfer from one train to another, much in the Harvey House fashion.

#### BYRON BAY

Until just a few years ago, Byron Bay, the easternmost point on the Australian continent, was an active station stop for those who wished to holiday in this beautiful area of sun and surf. The station features a long platform and is open and active. Sadly, buses – not trains – stop here several times a day to whisk passengers about 60 miles to the east to the town of Casino, where the Australian Country Rail system operates the standard gauge mainline between Sydney and Brisbane. [Photo #19]

Byron Bay is still a hippy hangout as it was many years ago. [Photo #20] A large lighthouse, built in 1901, still warns ships of the hazardous shoals below. [Photo #21]

Fuel for the lighthouse lamp arrived by train and was hauled to the summit by horse-drawn carriage. During its construction, commencing in 1899, important elements for the lighthouse, including the First Order lens and the clockwork mechanism arrived by train as well. During its christening, the Prime Minister of Australia should have arrived by train as well because his ship was delayed one day by rough weather. The townsfolk had their party without him.

(The Author would like to thank the fine folks of Australia and their wonderful museums for a delightful time and unparalleled assistance.)

#### PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

May 1, 2006, will be the 35th anniversary of Amtrak to assume almost all intercity passenger train operation in the United States. The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, Denver & Rio Grande Western, and Southern Railway chose not to join Amtrak, and continued to operate their own passenger service.

The Spring Summer 2006 Amtrak timetable will become effective on Monday, April 24, 2006.

#### SUNSET LIMITED

A Los Angeles-New Orleans sleeping car has been added to the *Sunset Limited*. The first eastbound sleeper began operating on the *Sunset Limited* which departed Los Angeles on Wednesday, Mar. 8, 2006, and the first westbound sleeper began operating on the *Sunset* which departed New Orleans on Sunday, Mar. 13. Sleeper space is still being sold in the Transition-Dormitory Sleeping car.

#### TEXAS EAGLE

During the month of March 2006 only, space in the *Texas Eagle* Transition-Dormitory was sold to the public only on the days when the through Chicago-Los Angeles cars operated.

#### EMPIRE BUILDER

A second sleeping car began operating on the *Empire Builder* with its departures from Chicago on Mar. 31, and Seattle on Apr. 2.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway freight train Z CHCPTL2 09 derailed six cars at Grizzly, Mont., on Feb. 11 at 2:25 p.m. CT, blocking both main tracks. Grizzly is 90 miles east of Whitefish. The derailment disrupted *Empire Builder* operations.

As a result of the derailment the westbound *Builder* (Tr. No. 7, Feb. 10) was terminated at Havre, Mont., and its passengers were bussed westward to Spokane, Wash., to board equipment representing the Seattle (Tr. No. 7, Feb 10), and Portland (Tr. No. 27, Feb. 10) sections of the *Builder*. The eastbound Seattle (Tr. No. 8, Feb. 11) and Portland (Tr. No. 28, Feb. 11) sections of the *Builder* were terminated at Spokane. Passengers from those trains were bussed eastbound to Havre to board the equipment from Tr. No. 7 (Feb. 10) which represented Tr. No. 8 (Feb. 11) from Havre to Chicago.

#### SAN JOAQUIN CORRIDOR

Between Jan. 11 and Feb. 18, 2006, on Thursdays through Sundays, BNSF conducted a major tie replacement project on its Stockton Subdivision. During that time adjustments were made to *San Joaquin* trains. Some trains were replaced with buses between Stockton and Fresno, and other trains held for open track. The project was scheduled to end on Feb. 27, but was completed early.

#### CAPITOL CORRIDOR

The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Agency (CCJPA) Board released its Draft Business Plan for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008 recently. As part of the public review process, the CCJPA invited members of the public to review the plan and provide input regarding the future plans for the *Capitol Corridor* (fares, schedules, and stations). In addition to the public workshop held on March 23, 2006, from 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. in the Bay Area Rapid Transit Boardroom in Oakland, several workshops were held aboard *Capitol Corridor* trains. The workshops were scheduled in the rear coach aboard *Capitol*

*Corridor* trains on the following dates and times: March 23, Tr. No. 540, 5:00 pm-6:00 p.m.; March 27, Tr. No. 542, 4:15 p.m.-6:40 p.m. Tr. No. 544, 5:40 p.m.-7:15 p.m.; March 28, Tr. No. 538, 3:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.; March 29, Tr. No. 545, 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Tr. No. 547, 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

The *Capitol Corridor* expected to board its 10 millionth passenger in March. The *Capitol Corridor* service began in December 1991 with six daily trains between San Jose and Sacramento. In October 1998 the CCJPA assumed management responsibility for the service.

Currently CCJPA operates 24 weekday and 18 weekend trains between Oakland and Sacramento, 14 daily trains between Oakland and San Jose, six daily trains between Sacramento and Roseville, and four daily trains between Roseville and Auburn.

#### CASCADES CORRIDOR

BNSF has scheduled a major trackwork project near Tacoma on Wednesday, Apr. 26, requiring that the railroad be closed to all traffic from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. that day.

The *Coast Starlight* (Tr. No. 14, Apr. 24) will terminate at Portland on Apr. 25. Its passengers bound for stations north of there will be bused to their destinations. The *Coast Starlight* (Tr. No. 11, Apr. 26) will depart from Portland on Apr. 26. Its passengers boarding at Seattle and intermediate stations will be bused to Portland.

*Amtrak Cascades* trains will be affected as follows on that day. Seattle-Eugene Tr. Nos. 500 and 507 will operate between Eugene and Portland only, with bus connections to stations north of Portland. Seattle-Portland Tr. Nos. 501 and 506 will not operate. Substitute bus service will be operated. Portland-Seattle Tr. No. 508 will operate normally. Seattle-Eugene Tr. No. 509 will operate, but may run very late due to freight train congestion.

BNSF installed rail in the Nelson Bennett Tunnel, MP 6.7 of the Seattle Subdivision, 7.5 miles south of the Tacoma Feb. 2 and 3, and on Monday, Feb. 6, 2006.

On those dates the work was scheduled around the *Coast Starlight* (Tr. Nos. 11/14). *Amtrak Cascades* Tr. No. 506 (Portland-Seattle) was cancelled in its entirety, and Tr. No. 507 (Seattle-Eugene, Ore.) was cancelled between Seattle and Portland. Alternate transportation was provided.

The tunnel originally contained two tracks, but was singled-tracked with the rails moved to the center of the tunnel to accommodate double stack COFC trains.

#### TALGO TROUBLES

During a switching move in the Portland Union Station on the afternoon of Feb. 11, the *Mt. Adams* Talgo trainset powered by Amtrak F59 PHI 469 derailed. The train was moving south into Track No. 2 with AMTK 459 pulling. The train was being operated from cab car 90253 on the north end of the trainset with the conductor on the south end protecting the move. The 469, baggage car, and two coaches entered Track No. 2 then the rest of the trainset moved onto Track No. 3 derailing the next three coaches. The rest of the train remained on the track.

It was confirmed that the switch points moved under the train causing the derailment, but no official cause for the movement has been announced.

The derailment blocked Track No. 3 where the Portland section of the *Empire Builder* (Tr. No. 28) was scheduled to

depart at 4:45 p.m. In order to depart the train had to make a reverse movement back to the Steel Bridge and depart on Track 5. Unfortunately, the Union Pacific and Lake yard had a train lined up to move across the Steel Bridge at that time which delayed the departure. The *Builder* finally departed at 5:35 p.m.

Due to equipment shortages in the Pacific Northwest arising from the derailment of the Talgo trainset, several service adjustments were made.

Damage to the derailed Talgo trainset is estimated at over \$215,000.

#### LAKE SHORE LIMITED

Due to equipment shortages the *Lakeshore Limited* (Tr. Nos. 48/49) operated a Chicago to Albany round trip with *Superliner* equipment. Tr. No. 48 departed Chicago on Feb. 13, and Tr. No. 49 departed Albany on Feb. 15. The consist was AMTK 92 and 175 (P-42)/1756 Baggage/34088/34085 Coaches/33024 *Sight-seer Lounge*/38030 Diner/32011 Sleeper/39024 Transition Sleeper. The sleeping car space in the Transition Sleeper was sold.

#### NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Severe significant snowfall followed by high winds disrupted service on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) on Feb. 12 and 13. Disruptions were primarily on the New York-Philadelphia-Washington segment of the NEC.

On Feb. 12, at least five *Acela Express* and six *Regional Service* trains were cancelled with passengers directed to other *Acela Express* trains and *Regional Service* trains which operated on modified schedules. Some *Empire Service* (Albany-Rensselaer, N.Y.) and *Keystone Service* (Harrisburg, Pa.-New York) trains were cancelled, also.

On Feb. 13 Amtrak planned to operate the following service between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

From Washington to New York, Boston and other destinations (northbound) 12 *Acela Express* departures and 14 *Regional Service* departures.

From New York to Washington and other destinations (southbound) 12 *Acela Express* departures and 12 *Regional Service* departures.

From New York to Boston and other destinations (northbound) 6 *Acela Express* departures and 10 *Regional Service* departures.

From Boston to New York, Washington and other destinations (southbound) 6 *Acela Express* departures and 10 *Regional Service* departures.

Between New York and Albany and other destinations (northbound and southbound) 9 *Empire Service* round trips.

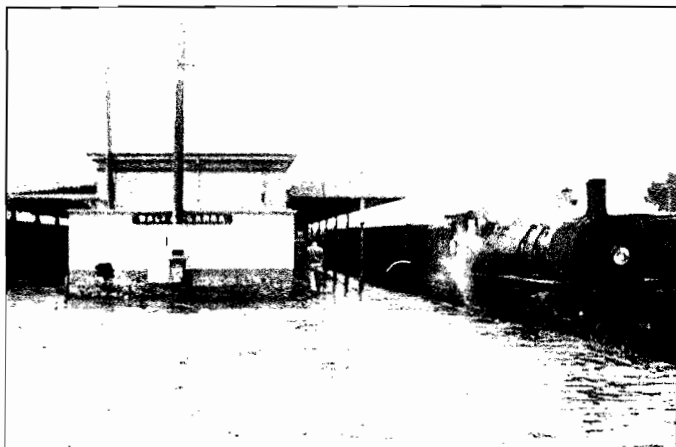
Between Harrisburg and Philadelphia and other destinations (east and westbound) 7 *Keystone Service* round trips.

On Feb. 14 Amtrak expected to operate all *Acela Express*, *Metroliner*, *Regional Service*, *Empire*, *Keystone* and *Shuttle* services with minimal delays.

#### ACELA EXPRESS

During the month of March Amtrak conducted a test food service program aboard Monday through Friday *Acela Express* Tr. Nos. 2109 (Dp. New York 8:00 a.m.-Ar. Washington, D.C. 10:49 a.m.) and 2122 (Dp. Washington, D.C. 5:00 p.m.-Ar. New York 7:50 p.m.). In addition to the food service provided in the Bistro Car, "At Seat Service" was offered. As a Cart Attendant passed through the train, a limited selection of snacks and

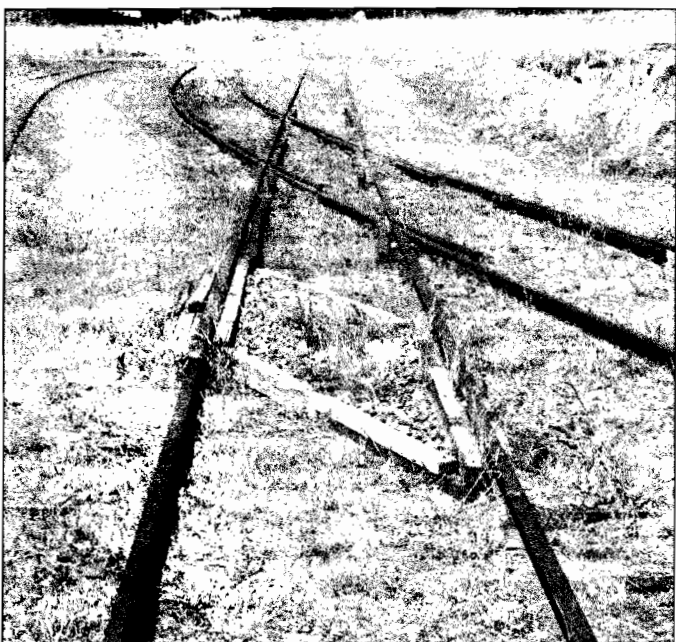




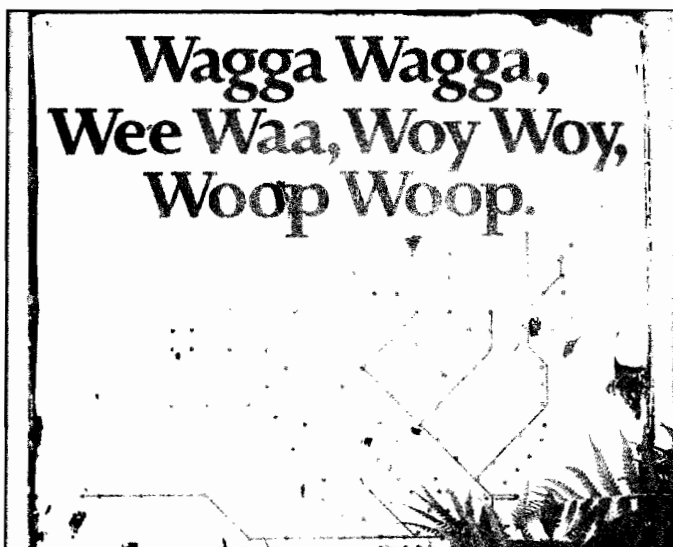
#16 *The narrow-gauge portion of the Sydney Express, Train 26, is ready to leave Wallangarra at 10 a.m. on January 15, 1962.*



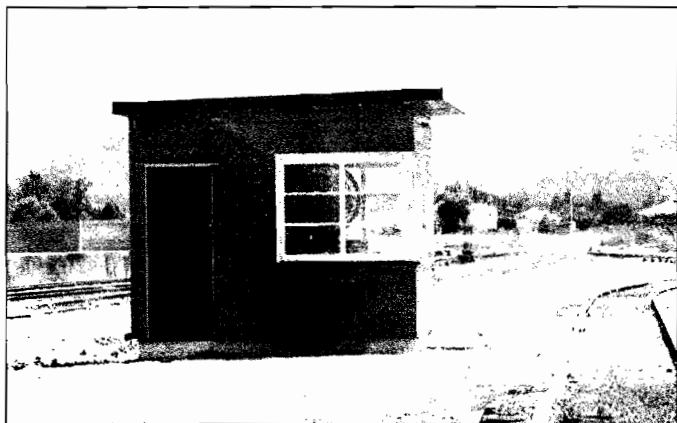
#19 *Compare Byron Bay against Tenterfield.*



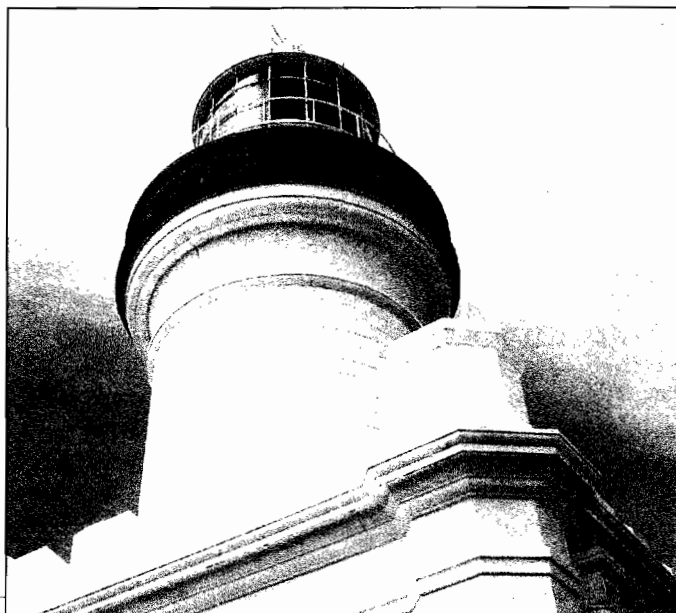
#17 *One of many dual-gauge diamonds is in place at Wallangarra. The set of tracks shown disappears southward with the standard gauge track crossing over the narrow gauge. The two tracks run side-by-side for about one-quarter mile.*



#20 *Hippy hangout sign is seen at Byron Bay.*



#18 *The narrow-gauge scale-house at Wallangarra features a still-working scale marked with gross weight limits for portions of track North (toward Brisbane) and South (toward Sydney).*



#21 *The immense Cape Byron lighthouse is Australia's brightest at 2.2 million candlepower.*

beverages were available for purchase by Business Class passengers. A menu listing the items available was placed in seatback pockets.

#### EASTERN SPECIAL TRAINS

Amtrak operated a round trip special train from Washington, D.C. to Williamsburg, Va. on Feb. 2 and 4, 2006, for the Congressional Democratic Caucus. It's consist was AMTK 43 P42-8/177 P42-8/9800 Conference Car/82538 *Regional Coach*/82547 *Regional Coach*/43363 Full Dinette/82068 *Regional Coach*/82090 *Regional Coach*/28365 Full Dinette/82083 *Regional Coach*.

On Feb. 2 and 3 Amtrak operated a round trip special train from Newark, N.J. to Washington, D.C. for the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce. Its consist was AMTK 914 AEM7AC/925 AEM7AC/21195/21027/43376 Full Dinette/21021/44846 Business Class/21018/21134/48165 Club Dinette/48164 Club Dinette/21169/21117/21123/44839 Business Class/48180 Club Dinette/82031 *Regional Coach*/21151/21034/21124.

#### NEW LAUS TO LAX BUS SERVICE

On March 15, 2006, Los Angeles World Airports expanded its FlyAway bus service to offer non-stop service from Los Angeles Union Station to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The Airport FlyAway buses depart from Union Station's Patsaouras Bus Plaza, Berth 9, and make stops at each airline terminal.

FlyAway bus tickets are sold 24 hours a day from a staffed kiosk located on Patsaouras Plaza.

Buses departs every 30 minutes (on the hour and half hour) between 5:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. with hourly service between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Travel time is expected to be 35-45 minutes. One way and round trip fares are: Adults \$3 and \$6; Children (ages 2-12) \$2 and \$4; LAX employees \$2 and \$4. Children under two years of age ride free. LAX employees may purchase a monthly pass for \$60. Parking is available at the Union Station Gateway Parking Garage for \$6 per day.

#### TICKET BY MAIL IMPROVEMENTS

Effective Feb. 14 Amtrak improved its tickets by mail process. Tickets purchased nine or more days prior to departure date can be sent by regular mail. Formerly the time was 11 days prior to departure.

Tickets purchased closer to departure dates can be sent by express mail three or four days prior to departure depending on when they were purchased. For tickets purchased Sunday through Thursday noon, the time is three or more days before departure; for reservations made Thursday noon through Saturday, the time is four or more days before departure.

#### PASSENGER RESERVATION TELEPHONE NUMBERS

When reservations are made, Amtrak requests the passenger's telephone number in case it is necessary to contact the passenger to advise them of a service disruption or schedule change.

Amtrak is now requiring the passenger's home and destination telephone numbers, and cellphone number (if available). Reservations made without telephone numbers now must have the reason for no telephone numbers provided documented so that Amtrak can explain to a passenger why they were not contacted when necessary.

#### AMTRAK VACATIONS RETURNS

The sale of Amtrak Vacation tour packages will resume in April. The new program will be managed and operated by Beverly, Massachusetts-based operator Yankee Holidays.

Yankee Holidays and Amtrak are developing a full Amtrak Vacations program, including packages to popular U.S. and Canadian destinations such as New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle and Montreal. Packages may include rail and air reservations, car rentals, hotel accommodations, attraction admissions and sightseeing options.

Additionally, Yankee Holidays will pre-purchase theater tickets in Toronto and New York City, allowing them to provide the best seats to all shows. The Amtrak Air-Rail program will also be sold by Amtrak Vacations.

Amtrak Vacations packages will go on sale on April 3, 2006. Vacationers may contact Yankee Holidays to book Amtrak Vacations packages at (866) 830-6372. The Amtrak vacations.com web site will also be available on that date.

#### AMTRAK EN ESPANOL

Amtrak launched a complete Spanish-language version of its website, accessible at [Espanol.Amtrak.com](http://Espanol.Amtrak.com) and [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com) (from a link at the top of the page) in February.

By clicking on the "En Español" button on the Amtrak home page, or logging onto [Espanol.Amtrak.com](http://Espanol.Amtrak.com), Spanish-speaking customers can access schedules, routes, and special offers. Customers can also enjoy complete access to online reservation capabilities entirely in Spanish. In addition, Amtrak also provides telephone customer service in Spanish, available at the railroad's toll-free number, 1-800-USA-RAIL.

For Amtrak En Español, the railroad deployed TransMotion® technology provided by MotionPoint Corporation for the translated Amtrak site. MotionPoint will maintain the Spanish-language version of Amtrak's site, while Amtrak will continue to update its English-language site. The use of MotionPoint's technology avoids the need for parallel sites, duplicate work, and does not require continuous notification when changes have been made to the English language site.

#### BNSF SPECIAL TRAINS IN COLORADO

On Feb. 10, 2006, five Burlington Northern Santa Fe business cars made a round trip from Denver to Winter Park, Colo. on the rear of the Ski Train. To accommodate the BNSF cars on that day, the first five cars of the Ski Train were cut out and left in Denver. The BNSF business cars were used for a marketing special.

The cars were BNSF 64 - *Marias Pass* - Sleeper (ex-ATSF)/BNSF 31 - *Bay View* - Full Dome (ex-ATSF)/BNSF 11 - *Fred Harvey* - Diner (ex-ATSF)/BNSF 28 - *Mountain View* - Club/Lounge (ex-GN)/BNSF 1 - *Mississippi River* - Business Car (ex-CB&Q).

On Feb. 13, the train operated from Denver to Cheyenne pulled by BNSF 7326. At Cheyenne, the locomotive was cut off, turned on the wye, and coupled to the rear of the train for the return trip to Denver. At the conclusion of the trip the train departed Denver for Topeka via the Joint Line and La Junta.

#### RAILCRUISE AMERICA TRAIN SOLD

St. Louis-based RailCruise America sold its equipment to the Kansas City Southern Railway early in 2006. RailCruise America cited the prospect of continuing escalating costs of fuel,

trackage fees, insurance, city taxes, and provisions as the reason for the sale. Another reason mentioned was increasing congestion on the railroads resulting in unpredictability of departure and arrival times.

KCS plans to use the train for private corporate service.

**WIRELESS INTERNET ABOARD VIA RAIL**

On Feb. 27, 2006, VIA Rail Canada officially launched its Wireless Internet (Wi-Fi) access service on board its trains, in several stations and in Panorama lounges in the Québec City-Windsor corridor – a first in North America. The service is being offered to all travelers between Montreal and Québec City and in many VIA 1 class cars between Montreal-Toronto. By the end of this year, all VIA 1 and Comfort class travelers will be able to access the Internet on all VIA intercity trains in Ontario and Quebec.

VIA offers three types of rate plans, adapted to travelers' needs: a single-use plan, a full-day plan and a monthly plan. The single-access plan, valid for 15 minutes, costs \$3.99 and each additional minute costs \$0.30. Full-day access, valid for 24 hours, costs \$8.95. Frequent travelers can subscribe to a monthly plan at a cost of \$46.

The system combines satellite and cellular communications and the Wi-Fi technology which allows access to the Internet. Thus, travelers using the Wi-Fi service provided by Opti-Fi will be able to take advantage of continuous wireless access on board. Passengers whose computers are equipped with Wi-Fi technology or who use personal digital assistants will automatically have the service available when they turn on their devices.

The Wireless Internet service offered by VIA is the result of a five-year partnership with Parsons, one of the world's leading engineering and program management firms. Parsons has invested US \$10 million in this partnership to implement a network focused on consumers, and offering a range of private and public applications.

VIA kicked-off its Wi-Fi access service at a media event held in the Panorama Lounge in the Toronto Union Station that day. Following the event the journalists in attendance rode a VIA 1 class car to Burlington and back.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LOGISTICS AIRPORT**

The private development partner at Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA) (former site of George Air Force Base) announced an agreement to build a new 250,000-square-foot cross-dock facility at the airport. Cross-dock facilities are places where goods are transferred from one mode of transportation to another.

Sterling International will contract with Cal Cartage, a third-party logistics provider, to build the facility by early 2007. Stirling Director of Logistics Services Felicia Cousar said March 1 "Cal Cartage has the largest presence in the port of Los Angeles and 13 facilities located nationwide."

Meanwhile Victorville is waiting for a decision by Burlington Northern Santa Fe on where it will build a \$200 million rail facility. BNSF officials are close to making their decision and Victorville is considered the top candidate among other cities like Barstow and Bakersfield. Victorville has been willing to invest around \$25 million in the installation of the rail spur that

would connect the rail line to SCLA. also, refusal of the city of San Bernardino to let BNSF expand makes Victorville seem like an excellent choice.

If chosen, Victorville estimates the creation of many thousands of jobs to service the 3,800-acre rail complex. Fresh off a very profitable 2005, railroad companies continue to expand operations in Southern California. "The key of the growth of Southern California is distribution and warehousing, and Victorville could benefit by this in a big way," said Lee and Associates Urban Economist Ron Barbieri.

Fort Worth-based BNSF earned \$1.5 billion in 2005. A new profit record for the nation's second largest railroad company. BNSF spokeswoman Lena Kent said no decision has been made on where the rail facility will be located and offered no date for an announcement.

[Info. from *Victorville Daily Press* via Chard Walker]

**AMTRAK ENDPOINT ON TIME PERFORMANCE  
FEBRUARY 2006**

Service	Trains		On Time Percent / Goal
	Operated	Late	
<i>Acela Express</i>	631	74	88.3 / 94.0
<i>Auto Train</i>	56	48	14.3 / 70.0
<i>California Zephyr</i>	56	49	12.5 / 70.0
<i>Capitol Limited</i>	56	39	30.4 / 70.0
<i>Capitols</i>	624	180	71.2 / 85.0
<i>Cardinal</i>	24	17	29.2 / 70.0
<i>Carolinian</i>	60	41	31.7 / 85.0
<i>Cascades</i>	253	201	20.6 / 85.0
<i>City of New Orleans</i>	56	8	85.7 / 70.0
<i>Clocker/Keystone</i>	491	83	83.1 / 90.0
<i>Coast Starlight</i>	56	54	3.6 / 70.0
<i>Crescent</i>	56	48	14.3 / 70.0
<i>Downeaster</i>	244	36	83.9 / 85.0
<i>Empire Service</i>	635	155	75.6 / 85.0
<i>Empire Builder</i>	108	83	23.1 / 70.0
<i>Heartland Flyer</i>	56	10	82.1 / 85.0
<i>Hiawatha</i>	382	33	91.4 / 85.0
<i>Hoosier State</i>	31	8	74.2 / 85.0
<i>Illinois</i>	224	45	79.9 / 85.0
<i>Lake Shore Limited</i>	112	73	34.8 / 70.0
<i>Metroliner</i>	36	5	86.1 / 94.0
<i>Michigan</i>	280	144	48.6 / 85.0
<i>Missouri</i>	211	91	56.9 / 85.0
<i>Pacific Surfliner</i>	695	139	80.0 / 85.0
<i>Pennsylvanian</i>	56	10	82.1 / 85.0
<i>Piedmont</i>	56	25	55.4 / 85.0
<i>Regional</i>	1422	254	82.1 / 90.0
<i>San Joaquins</i>	336	214	36.3 / 85.0
<i>Silver Service</i>	132	108	18.2 / 70.0
<i>Southwest Chief</i>	56	6	89.3 / 70.0
<i>Sunset Limited</i>	24	21	12.5 / 70.0
<i>Texas Eagle</i>	56	34	39.3 / 70.0
ALL AMTRAK	7451	2336	68.6 / 85.0

**UP TO BUILD NEW STAGING TRACKS IN TEMPE**

Union Pacific Railroad has selected a location in Tempe, Ariz., for construction of two new staging tracks. Located along

Union Pacific's branch line between Baseline and Guadalupe Roads, east of Kyrene Road, the new tracks will support the growing freight shipping needs of Tempe-area businesses.

Crews are scheduled to begin construction of the two 2,500-foot tracks in April. Each track will be capable of temporarily staging 28 cars for the railroad's nearly 20 customers in the Tempe area. Completion is expected in late June.

[Info from www.uprr.com via Charles Varnes]

#### URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by DICK FINLEY LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL RIDERSHIP

January 2006	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	124,304	76,766	35,697	16,318
Saturday Ave.	81,707	54,821	21,859	7,288
Sunday Ave.	65,877	48,059	16,950	7,123
Monthly Total	3,332,463	2,119,711	938,777	414,561

[Info. from Tom Nelson]

#### TIMETABLES

A Metro Gold Line timetable has been issued effective Feb. 13, 2006. It includes the new Express Service with six trains each morning and evening during rush hours Monday through Friday. The Saturday, Sunday and Holiday schedules remain the same as before. The Map and Connections/Parking sections have been simplified.

#### IN-TRAIN VIDEO CAMERAS

Metro presently has 104 Heavy Rail Vehicles (HRVs) currently operating on the Red Line subway system and 121 Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs) on the Blue, Green, and Gold Lines. The In-Train CCTV – Carborne DVR System (System) is used to provide real-time security monitoring, and graffiti and incident recording in the interior of the existing fleet of Metro rail vehicles. The System will have the capability to store video and event data, and ensure prompt retrieval of saved information at any time. During installation of the planned system, staff discovered that additional cameras would be necessary for video coverage of the passenger areas and to look forward from the operator's cab.

At the Metro Board meeting on Feb. 23, authorization was passed to provide additional video cameras with all necessary installation requirements for 346 additional cameras, 104 for HRVs and 242 for LRVs in an amount not to exceed \$800,000.

#### COUNTYWIDE BICYCLE PLANS

In Feb. 2002 the Board directed staff to prepare a new countywide bicycle transportation plan and incorporate the 11 requirements of the State Bicycle Transportation Account Compliance (BTA) Document. Metro's 2005 regional planning has shifted the focus from arterial bikeways to a strategy of using bicycles with transit to fully utilize, enhance and leverage the regional transit system and funding mechanisms.

The Strategic Plan includes a listing of 167 identified "bike-transit hubs" in the county, from which interested cities nominated locations for 12 Bike-Transit Hubs, with five for rail.

Red Line – North Hollywood, Los Angeles.

Gold Line – Chinatown, Los Angeles.

Blue Line – Willow, Long Beach.

Metrolink – Downtown Pomona.

Metrolink – Palmdale.

The BTA Document is an inventory and mapping of existing and proposed bicycle facilities in the county, bicycle trip estimates, and past and future expenditures for bicycle facilities. By adopting Metro's plan as their own, any city and the County, can become eligible for the State BTA grant program.

#### BIKE LOCKER RENTAL PROGRAM

Bike lockers, which totally enclose the bicycle, are available at the following rail stations.

*Blue Line:* Grand Ave. (at L.A. Trade Tech), Florence, Imperial/Wilmington, Del Amo, Wardlow, and Willow.

*Green Line:* Norwalk, Lakewood, Crenshaw, El Segundo, Douglas.

*Red Line:* Union Station, Vermont/Santa Monica, Hollywood/Western, Universal City, and North Hollywood (future expansion).

*Gold Line:* Highland Park, and Sierra Madre Villa.

#### TICKET MACHINES

Transit Access Pass (TAP) fareboxes, stand-alone validators (SAV) and ticket vending machines (TVM) are popping up on Metro buses and at Metro Rail stations.

Installation of 38 SAVs and 60 TVMs on the Green Line was recently completed. Installation started, Feb. 13, on the Red Line, where 122 SAVs (terminals that deduct payment from TAP cards) and 54 TVMs (which take cash and dispense tickets, as well) was to be completed by mid-March.

A new feature on the Red Line will be the "virtual gates" created by the placement of stand-alone validators, which will allow patrons with smart cards to walk past and "tap" for their rides in a barrier-free system.

#### RED LINE

The MTA is considering installing turnstiles at subway entrances to make sure every rider pays. The transit system now operates on an honor system, but officials estimate that 6,000 people a day aren't buying tickets. That concerns the agency, which spent \$19 million last year to patrol the subway and is facing an operating deficit of \$125 million next year.

[Info. from *Pasadena StarNews*]

#### GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

The tunnel-boring-machine (TBM) built by Herrenknecht in Germany has been working in the first bore for several weeks, moving at 33 feet per day. The machines will bore 1.7-mile twin tunnels from 1st/Boyle to 1st/Lorena. The second TBM was only recently put in service at the Lorena Street end of the twin bores. There is no rock to slow passage as the material under Boyle Heights is alluvial soil.

The First Street Bridge over the Los Angeles River is to be widened to accommodate both LRVs and gasoline vehicles. No strengthening of the bridge is considered necessary, since Los Angeles Railway cars once traveled the route.

Because of the need to position a pier for the Eastside Extension rail bridge across the 101 Freeway at Los Angeles Union Station, Caltrans has redesigned the roadway alignment, eliminating the reverse curve immediately east of Alameda Street – to the benefit of both parties. Two of the eight columns needed for the bridge had been constructed as of last fall.

The construction fences surrounding the construction staging areas along 1st St. that provide noise protection and shield construction activities are being given a new paint job. In

addition, muralists have initiated the painting of murals that have significance to the history and culture of Boyle Heights. The murals are expected to be completed early this year.

[Eastside Extension info. from Jack Whitmeyer]

Some 70 LA City firefighters and more than 12 fire engines descended on an Eastside Extension construction site Jan. 28, for three days of intensive emergency rescue exercises. Equipped with first aid kits, stretchers and breathing apparatus, an Urban Search and Rescue team – supported by firefighters from Boyle Heights and downtown LA – deployed into the tunnel at 1st and Boyle to search for three “injured miners.”

#### EXPOSITION LIGHT RAIL LINE

The MTA is hiring staffers to work on the Exposition LRT line from Downtown Los Angeles to Culver City, opening in 2010. It's a big construction job and the MTA has eight positions to fill, including a chief project officer, a director of finance, a receptionist, and two posts to help with community relations. Construction starts this summer. If you're eligible and ready, check out [buildexpo.org](http://buildexpo.org) or call (213) 922-4854.

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority's board of directors recently approved a \$420 million design/build contract for the 8.5-mile line. A joint venture of Vista-based FCI Construction Inc., Aliso Viejo-based Fluor Corp. and Pasadena-based Parsons Corp. Eight stations will be added at an estimated \$640 million, but that contract has yet to be awarded.

[Info. from *L.A. Downtown News*]

#### METRO GOLD LINE TO RED LINE CORRIDOR

Burbank and Glendale leaders want a public transit link to pass through their cities, connecting the Metro Gold Line to the Red Line. Burbank, Glendale and Pasadena have come up with \$90,000 to study the link, which is envisioned as a subway, light rail or rapid bus system that would go through Glendale and Burbank and serve the Bob Hope Airport.

The problem is that the project would cost hundreds of million of dollars and is not even on the MTA's wish list, which is already packed with other higher priority projects. However, a new MTA Board member will be seated in April, giving the cities a chance to plug their own transportation needs during the campaign to fill the seat. After seven years on the 13-member MTA Board, Lancaster Mayor Frank Roberts steps down in mid-April.

Ara Najarian, a Glendale city councilman, and David Spence, a La Cañada Flintridge councilman, have announced plans to campaign for the seat, which represents the MTA's North County/San Fernando Valley Sector, including Burbank and Glendale as well as Lancaster, Palmdale, Santa Clarita, and Malibu. In the coming weeks, candidates will try to garner support from officials in the area to represent transport needs on the board.

Roberts is leaving the MTA board because he is not seeking re-election in the Lancaster City Council April 13, and MTA members must be elected officials. Roberts said the 12 cities he represents will look to his replacement to fight for their interests.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

#### SAN DIEGO

In Metropolitan Transit System Board action on Feb. 23, 2006, a Washington Group International amendment would continue construction management services. It was assumed that

all of the construction on Mission Valley East (MVE) project would be completed by the end of Dec. 2005, but project closeout will take to the end of May 2006. The recommended budget transfer was for \$1,100,000.

All but 11 S70 LRVs in San Diego Trolley, Inc.'s (SDTI) current vehicle fleet have a piece of plastic called Laxan installed in front of the window glass in the passenger compartment. The Laxan provides protection to passengers against flying pieces of glass if a window breaks from stones or debris being thrown at the LRV from outside. Also, it provides sacrificial film that can be replaced quickly and relatively inexpensively (compared to the cost of new window glass) if vandalized with graffiti.

In summer 2005 SDTI received new S70 LRVs, which came with 7-mil-thick antigraffiti film glued directly to the window glass. It provides a distortion-free view and no water spots as there is no air gap between the film and glass, as occurs on the 1/8-inch-thick piece of plastic mounted in a frame installed right next to the window glass in the previous installation.

The new film also provides some protection against broken window glass and allows an easy replacement option when graffitied by vandals. On Feb. 23 the board authorized the supply and installation of LRV window film on U2 and SD100 vehicles for a total cost not to exceed \$95,776. Also authorized was an option for a one-year maintenance agreement to replace graffitied window films on the LRV fleet, on an as-needed basis, for a total cost not to exceed \$132,000.

The Board of Directors received an update on the status of the Grossmont Trolley Station joint development project. Fairfield Residential, LLC, is proposing to develop 527 apartments over the existing parking lot of the Station. Eighty of these units would be affordable to low- and moderate-income families. The project will also provide 2,800 square feet of ground-floor commercial space. The bus stop and trolley station would be retained on site along with planned pedestrian enhancements. The apartments would be built over two levels of structured parking. Six hundred exclusive parking spaces would be provided at ground level of the parking structure oriented to the existing trolley station to replace the existing 600 surface parking spaces.

In December, the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) carried a total of 6,148,259 passengers, with 2,714,211 traveling on MTS rail. MTS bus carried 22.74 passengers per revenue hour while MTS rail carried 178.70 passengers per revenue hour. MTS rail reported 97.7 percent of its trips on time.

MTS bus had 2.29 total collisions per 100,000 miles in Dec. MTS rail has two collisions at a rate of 0.29 total collisions per 100,000 miles.

#### BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT

BART ridership is growing so more cars are being added to some rush hour trains serving downtown San Francisco and Oakland stations as well as those cities' airports. Although the length of each train will vary from line to line, except on the Dublin/Pleasanton Line, which serves both the San Francisco and Oakland International Airports. All trains on this line will be nine cars long, which can comfortably seat about 600 passengers. BART routinely adjusts the length of trains to meet the demands of ridership.

BART's average ridership each weekday between Feb. 1 through Feb. 16, 2006, was approximately 326,500 passengers – or nearly 11,000 more passengers each weekday than BART's planners were forecasting when they put the annual budget together last year.

The current ridership is about 16,500 passengers higher than during the same time period in 2005. BART officials attribute the increase in ridership to BART's low cost, high frequency service as well as its 95 percent passenger on-time record. Officials believe more people are taking BART to bypass the Bay Area's gridlocked traffic and to save on the high cost of gasoline. Passengers pay 20 cents per mile on BART. A 2005 American Automobile Association study found drivers pay 69 cents per mile – and that doesn't include bridge tolls, parking fees or the recent increase in gasoline prices.

#### New Radio Site

BART is planning to build a new radio equipment facility within its Oakland Shop at 601 East 8th Street. This will replace the facility at the Lake Merritt Administration building, which is to be dismantled for seismic safety reasons. The Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration has been released to the public to assess the environmental evaluation of potential impacts and mitigation measures for the project. The study concludes that mitigation measures included in the project would ensure that all impacts remain at a less than significant level. The comment period was to extend through March 16, 2006, after which comments were to be considered by the BART Board of Directors prior to adoption of the final Mitigated Negative Declaration.

[BART info. from Charles Varnes]

#### SAN FRANCISCO MUNI

The new E-Embarcadero line, which would run from the Caltrain Station at Fourth and Townsend Streets to Fisherman's Wharf, would complement the F-Market line, which runs from Castro and Market Streets to the wharf and serves about 20,000 riders a day. However, Muni is currently staring down a \$65 million shortfall in the next two years, and Muni spokesman Alan Siegel said the agency would not instate any new service until the fiscal crisis has been addressed.

Conceived more than 20 years ago, the new line would streamline transit along the waterfront while relieving some of the burden on the F-Market line, transit advocates say. It would also allow riders easier access to AT&T Ball Park and the many tourist hotspots in the area.

E-Embarcadero would use the same historic streetcars as the F-Market and would run along tracks that have already been built, said Rick Laubscher, president of Market Street Railway, a 1,200-member volunteer group that helps Muni clean and restore historic cars.

[Info. from *San Francisco Examiner* via Charles Varnes]

#### SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT DISTRICT

The notion of building a commuter rail system in the North Bay resurfaced on Nov. 21, 2005, as part of a more than 150-page draft Environmental Impact Report. The report concludes that the area would be better off environmentally with a light rail system extending from Cloverdale in northern Sonoma County to Larkspur in central Marin County, where it would connect to the Golden Gate Transit ferry to San Francisco.

The report by the engineering consulting firm of Parson-Brinkerhoff was requested by the Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit (SMART) District, which plans to put a quarter-cent sales tax measure on the ballot next November to pay for the system.

Politicians and citizens groups in both counties have attempted for years to establish a rail system to get motorists off Highway 101, the main thoroughfare between Marin and Sonoma counties, where commuters must inch along bumper to bumper. So far, every tax measure that included rail transit has failed in Sonoma and Marin, the last one in 1998. Transportation taxes require a two-thirds majority.

The North Bay has a railroad right-of-way already in place, from the old Northwestern Pacific Railroad, which existed before passenger trains were driven out by the automobile and freight service was eroded away. The railroad corridor is owned locally and is being transferred to the SMART district, which was created by Marin and Sonoma counties to develop and run a passenger rail system.

The district proposes a 70-mile commuter train route with 14 stations between Cloverdale and Larkspur with tracks roughly parallel to Highway 101. A fleet of 14 diesel-powered cars carrying up to 90 passengers each would operate on weekdays to start with. The document estimates that by 2025, about 4,800 passengers would be riding the trains each day.

The project would also include a bicycle/pedestrian pathway parallel to the tracks along the entire distance, and shuttle service to the local communities would be provided free at most of the stations. The sales tax increase, proposed for 20 years for both counties, would raise the \$340 million cost of the rail system and the \$70 million cost of the bike trail. Annual operating and maintenance costs would be in the \$11 million range, according to the draft EIR.

The draft EIR compares the impacts of the SMART plan with proposals to offer express buses, to build a scaled-down version of the same plan or to do nothing. "The proposed project would be the environmentally superior alternative," concludes the executive summary of the draft EIR.

[Info. from *San Francisco Chronicle* via Charles Varnes]

#### PORTLAND, OREGON

The Green Line from Clackamas Town Center to downtown Portland will be a 38-minute ride, or from Clackamas to Portland International Airport a 30-minute ride that requires a transfer. The two Clackamas County light-rail stops, on Southeast Fuller Road and at Clackamas town Center, will have a 630- and a 750-space park-and-ride lot, respectively. Altogether, there will be 2,300 spaces in five park-and-ride lots – three in Portland and the two in Clackamas County.

TriMet's contractor, South Corridor Constructors, will finish the Green Line plans this fall. Construction will probably start in late 2006 or early 2007. Service should begin in September 2009. South Coast Constructors is a joint venture involving three companies: Granite Construction, Wildish Standard Paving, and Stacy and Widbeck.

The project money is mainly from the federal government (\$334.4 million) and Portland (\$62.3 million). Metro, TriMet, Clackamas County and the state are chipping in

[Info. from Caroline Hobson]